

An Independent Day

Thursday Morning, the day before the day when people get rowdy to celebrate what they view as their right to do so. I have a sty in my eye, and thankfully, although it is as big as I think it is gonna get, it is coming to a head, and I feel it will be gone soon. After four hours sleep last night, I am returning my lover's laundry to her, clean and folded. She reacts by passing back out in bed. You are beautiful baby. I take off walking, in order so that I am not late and my boss does not have another reason to hate me. Wading towards icy waters.

As I am walking, solitary, down L St., nearing 21st, I am passed by a disheveled looking black man on a bicycle. "Hey" he shouts in my general direction as he passes me.

"Hey" I shout back as he continues riding, very poorly, I might add. He brings his bike to a stop at the intersection in my path, using his feet instead of the breaks that are not there, and turns so that he can speak at me, still perched on his bike. He is wearing Pajama bottoms, and a old dirty T-shirt. On his feet are those rubber foam Tiva-esque sandals. On his head is a somewhat new looking baseball cap, worn high on the head much like you would see a kid wearing on a T-ball team, who really didn't want to be there. Due to his hat "topping" his head, and not really "capping" it, I see that his hair is naturally dreaded in tight rolls, shortish, and crazy in that cool sort of way. I like hair like that. I don't tell this to the man. He has about half of his teeth, but luckily for him, still retains most of the front ones.

"Help" he says in a crazy sort of way

"What"

"Can you help me out?"

"Sorry man, I don't have any change", I say as I see that I am going to miss my opportunity to cross the street by walklight. I urge him to come on with me.

"Come on, buddy, let's go....come one"

The entire time, his gaze is not focused on any one thing, especially me when we are conversing, and so, once again, he kind of looks wildly around and then grabs his bike in a panic and attempts to catch up with me as I am almost across the walk. He stops in front of a car that is stopped at the red light....as though he needs to say something to the driver. The driver evidently does not want to hear whatever it is this man has to say because he lays on his horn quick, yet sternlike, to usher the man out of his way. The guy crosses the rest of the way. I wait for him, but continue to proceed with my walking as if to say, "Uhhh, I will listen to you and stuff, but you gotta understand that I am on my way to work, and my boss already hates me....so I am gonna keep walking, and you can accompany me and talk, if you want to"

He accompanies me and talks.

"they took it all from me.....they took my clothes, they took my money, they took my (he was hard to understand...coulda been any number of things).....they took it all.....hey, Wanna buy a bike?"

He says this obviously meaning the old crusty, I could assume stolen, no brake having, Mountain Bike that he is riding. The seat post is bent in a broken sort of way.

"No Thanks" I say. If I were rich.....I still wouldn't buy such a thing. No matter how much help people need, I will still always push the envelope that has written on it "If you want to be a salesman, you must first retain a quality product to sell. Sure, you might be able to sell garbage to suckers....but they will always be suckers doing the buying, and really, how much of a challenge is that"....or something to that effect that would fit on an envelope. I remember that I have a Peach in my bag and that I wouldn't mind giving it to this guy....who I think could use some fruit...and I ask, "Hey, you want a Nectarine.....a piece of fruit?", at the same time forgetting that it is a peach, and not a nectarine....or maybe just wanting very badly to use such a complex word as "Nectarine".

He nods, and (all the while still with that glossy eyed stare off into space) continues informing me of how much he doesn't have...

"Man....All I have is this bike"

cont pg 6

Instructions: First time readers are advised to begin at the second paragraph; returning readers should include the first. First time readers are also urged not to include the first paragraph upon completion of the story.

Hello

Dudley was in his fifties, but he looks so bad. It was as if life never missed the opportunity to hit in with a two by four. He carried around a hand sweep among other things. He would go and clean the sidewalks as a good deed, I don't know what he was making up for but he never stopped. It was smart though, he always got money from the people walking between shops or the owners. Pity is close to fondness, it's like fondness without the touching. Characteristic of these people. I can't say all. Audrey wasn't she didn't have any time to be yet. She just three weeks old. And her mama and Skip. I can't remember what he was calling her that first day we met. Dudley had grabbed me from the elevator and began talking to me. He handed me his sweep. What were we talking about? The important thing was that Dudley fell to the ground and began to sweep with his hands. 'Common man! Sweep!' I got down and started sweeping without any effort. But displacing the pattern the storm had made last night began to interest me. The yellow dirt looked like a blown up fingerprint. Or an aerial shot of a desert somewhere. Probably not that's a stupid thing to say. Anyway Dudley kept moving and now was half in the little bushes to my right. I stopped to look at him but he got all urgent and signaled me to keep sweeping. Part of me kept sweeping but the rest watched a real fat tall guy pass by. Talking on a cellular phone and his white shirt was reflecting the whole sun. He was muscle fat. 'Listen, I just want him out, never in there again. I need to do this property and I can't sell this neighborhood' By that time he was on his way down the street and the conversation wasn't being yelled anymore. I looked at where he was pointing. Frames for a building had been put up. Fatty probably got in a fight with the subcontractor, and didn't apologize. Dudley was up though, taking back his broom as if I was going to try and keep it, some signed sports glove. And back up the block he walked. A dirt plot, with terrible landscaping, four shops, small ones, built into a large playhouse, converted into a theater for movies. That was the end of the block, beside a side entrance from the lobby of the theater. Across that corner was the bar downstairs, and a restaurant ground level. That was my life, all that was my life.

That first night I don't remember it raining until I got out of the restaurant, but it was too wet to have just started. I walked in the café and waited line. There were two girls, or women, they weren't thirty yet. They looked at me like so disconcerting they should have been eighty. Maybe that's how women work. You combine the age of the group they are in and that's how old they act and that's how old you treat em. But I tend to make things up. I don't even think they saw me. The father though. He saw me. Watched me let the door shut by itself. Pulled his kid closer. He knew a drunk. He was a drunk, but he never lost a job or broke the skin. That makes him ok. I didn't want to tell the hostess one, any number but one, two even would do. But I told her one and walked right out of the building. Into the rain. I didn't even know it'd been raining until I got inside the theater. My shoes were slipping on the stair well. The rainstorm made

the architecture seem gothic, but it wasn't. It was deco. Kept well. There was dark green marble everywhere. At least the floors were marble. That's what my shoes were slipping on. I heard the guard call out to me. I thought it was going to be another profiling by another security guard bent on becoming something, any of the fantasies would do. But he came with his hand out talking about making it right. I can't remember a word he said. He was old with an arctic moustache, I wasn't drunk, I don't remember being drunk. It was my shoes on the marble that made me slide around. He stopped talking while I was silent. Encouraged me to leave the building and walked away. I was on a second story, on the balcony of a second story looking at a one floor museum. A history of that small town. Caged up and waiting to petrify. When I got on the elevator that's when I met Dudley. He was carrying a plastic bag of eggs. We were bonding, or, he was just drunk and friendly, and we went down the elevator while he brought me up to speed on his life. No he didn't. We walked back out into the rainstorm. past that, it's just lightning and black cloud.

It shouldn't be called the seven deadly sins; it should be called the seven easiest sins. The seven one can't help feel. That first night, or day actually, next morning.... I woke up and it was dry. I don't know how we managed it but we both kept dry in some section of this extremely unfinished building. I never got how long Dudley had been staying in that shed. Have you ever seen a building with the plywood put up and the roof framing put up but no floor or anything to make it look like a building? Well that was how this was. After accepting an egg from Dudley, and being apologized to for not having any more left he.... We got up. Everything else, the roads, the fields they were drying out. That was when Dudley dropped and I began to sweep. Dudley quit his interest in me after getting his broom back. I followed him, walking back to the theater corner. The first shop was like a travel shop, or a decorating shop, I never looked at it. The only one I went into was the last. Skip called out as we walked by. He called out for somebody. Dudley kept walking but I went in. There were sunset paintings along the wall. Landscapes. They were pastels. He didn't do all of them but most were his. Even though the room was small, thin, it was bright and the colors just opened it up.

He leaned back, 'Oh, I'm sorry I thought you were Tiff.'

'Na.'

'Well, hey there, I'm Alexander, everyone calls me Skip.'

I was sort of waiting for an explanation... but I wasn't... but he gave me one.... so maybe I was.

'I bought the bar across the street from Skip.' I looked over as one is tend to do. 'Yeah, so it's just sorta a little joke or something.'

'Ok.'

He was sitting on a bar stool, with a backing. A high chair? A nice guy, had a short beard. Ran half way down his neck before being clean cut in a straight line. 'I thought you were Tiffany coming by. But she due for a baby any day, and could be at the hospital right now even.'

'She gonna model for you.' I didn't ask that. He said that. 'I was trying to branch out in to portraiture. I think I've enough landscapes.'

Dudley was behind me again spying Alexander's paintings. He said hello to Dudley. I looked back and Dudley did seem to have a vested interest in it all. Alexander asked for a critique, and got one. Dudley began going on about complimentary colors and the lack of linear qualities. I was impressed. No I wasn't. By that time I had gotten bored and moved on to the wall behind Alexander's stooily highchair. I never know why I ask the questions I do. But I started to ask, and he moved from Dudley to me. He explained some things about his life, superficial things like family and his home. Then I asked him about the bar, why he bought it. 'Well it was a good acquisition. The building itself was already mine, and the business is steady and a good influx comes on the weekend.'

'So the profit margin covers the loss for the purchase.'

'Uh, no. Its all paid for. When I bought the building, I opened up the restaurant. It is the only coffee shop in town, and everyone goes to the coffee shop, so the money was made. Skip had actually taken loans from me in the past for other reasons and so buying it was mostly just settling old loans. With better returns.'

Jealousy, is that one of the seven. I wanted what he wanted. He didn't even give up his debts on it. He got it all back. It's a really horrible thing to see someone succeed in that way. All the problems you have just take over when you hear a story like that. Now he just sits around painting. no more work. The phone rang, Alex excused himself and I got interested in Dudley again. Asking him where he left to. I wanted to shut Skip up from getting all excited.

'Dudley, what were you talking about just then. Subject matter?'

'Norman Rockwell. That's all you need to know.'

'She had it? great.' Alexander was talking to us now. Tiffany had the baby and he was kicking us out to visit her in the hospital. Had I known Tiffany before this, I would not have had one ounce of resistance to this. But it would be three more days before I met Tiffany. Tiffany and my second sin. Until that time, I had to get to know Dudley and what a crazy old coot he was.

Those eggs that he had the first night weren't accidental although they weren't intentional either, so I don't know what that makes them. What does that, for what ever reason he always had a bag of eggs. A clear plastic bag for grapes, filled with eggs. Sometimes they were boiled sometimes raw, a little of both a couple of times. They were good, no complaints I just with he could have gotten some something or other. Maybe some fried chicken. The story on Dudley was fractured. The only thing he wanted to talk about was art, if anything at all personal. He was married, still married he corrected me once. He wore his wedding band. She gave up on him, he said out of the blue when we were eating our eggs one afternoon. She, one day, stopped picking him up. Four children. twenty-five years, six of marriage and one day, she did not come out to the front yard and drag him inside. Twenty five years and she always walked out, what ever hour it was, and got him up from the wet lawn. Take him inside, undress his slobbering , shush him from wanting to wake up his kids and see them, never got to see them during the day. Wipe off his face with a hot cloth and set him in bed. Hell of a woman to put up with all that. It may not seem like much, didn't to me until I realized why she did it. He asked her one day, night morning wiping off his face again with that towel,

'Why, why do you bother with me Eddie?'

Her name was a derivative of Eddie, no it was Eddie. Strange name for a girl. But he said this woke him up from tiredness and sleepiness, drunkenness,

'I'm obsessed with what you once were.'

That would send me running. Anyone so self deprecating as that woman would drive me right into the attic. Eight more years of her doing that and the day the baby moved on out he came back. He hadn't seen her off, she was moving to Saint Louis with her husband to live with his family. Well he had planned to be back there for it but Skip didn't know anything about it, the original Skip, and let him drink along the night. He woke up in the morning his car was in the drive way but he had started walking away from the house, mistaking the reflection in the pond for the kitchen light. 'I sat up, looked back into the open windows and knew I could never go back. That I wasn't ever welcome back even though she'd accept me back.'

Dudley is a man of dedication, but the subject of his desire gets a lot of people wanting to stand up and give a speech. I think about my home and my wife and her speeches she repeated. Ex-wife. Ex-wife without regret.

Cont. next issue



Open Mics (all beginning at 20:00)

Mon.

The Blue Lamp (Alhambra & N)
The Fox and Goose (10th, between S & R)

Tues.

24K, prev. Cafe Mexicas, Cafe Paris
next to Rick's Desert (24th and K)
The True Love Coffeehouse (24th and J)

Wed.

Old Ironsides (10 & S)
The Distillery (21 & L) * 22:00 start

He

yeah. guys ARE horny. ADIDAS baby. All Day I Dream About Swimming...in Folsom Lake, because I hear it is so high right now...and then, I imagine, when I am swimming, I will think about sex...unless there is something else to think about...then I would probably think about that. Actually, I don't think about sex all that often, cept when I am masturbating or having sex. I don't do either all that often anymore. sigh. it must be easy being a girl. you can walk around with perverse thoughts and moist panties all day, and not a soul knows.

She

very true. we do have it made in that respect.

He

women.....perverts.....

She

YEP YEP. I think women have more of a libido than men actually. We just hide it better.

He

so, is that more "lying", or "keeping back some of the truth"?

sincerely yours,

Women behavioral theorist #1,542,670

She

I don't think it's either. it's just adjusting to one's environment. A woman's sexuality is not as easily discussed or accepted as a man's...

He

I think the only place that that may be true is within the confines of the conservative portion of our society. and the ONLY way to change that is for women to behave as if the situation is ideally different....which, from my perspective, it is. I, for one, treat women and men exactly the same...and I know a couple of other people that do also. Gender roles only exist as long as people fill those roles. I wish to god more women would be a bit more open.

She

you know what. I know for a fact that that is not true Dude. be honest w/urself. you treat men and women differently. it's natural to. we ARE different. You would never flirt and smile and gesture and cuddle up to a guy the way you do w/ women. gender roles are there. it's realizing them and working with that, accepting that it's a fact that we are different and that there are different things expected. there is still a sexual double standard. There probably always will be. look at human interaction, history. then tell me there's no double standard. if women want sex, if they flaunt it, they are desperate, or promiscuous, sometimes it can be attractive but the chase is more the object of the game initially and if a women makes it too easy, it gets old fast. if men do, it's expected, applauded at times. It is at times looked down upon but men are always allowed to and expected to have a libido. I wish to god men would stop getting so defensive when there are obvious differences and a female points it out. relax. admit it. There is a difference. that's like saying racism doesn't exist.

T
E



THE PARKING LOT IS FULL

by Jack McLaren and Pat Spacek

<http://www.plif.com>



At Heroin Queen™, We Treat You Right

"and now, this nectarine", I say as I pat him on his shoulder. A stiff grab/pat while facing him. Much like a Dad would give his son if he didn't exactly feel like hugging him. He immediately takes it and brings it to his mouth, like a man possessed. A very honest movement, which I enjoy.

I begin to walk away, and as I do, he shouts, "mmm, ssss a Peach!"

"Oh yeah! You're right, it is a Peach!"

He continues to eat. I continue to walk, mulling the encounter over in my mind. I don't think long about it, as one should not, but do come to a snappy little point that could supersede a story such as this one:

Even though you may be drawn to use big words, they will do little good in describing essentially simple things –

Pleasant over Professional, Simple be the way.

Use your hair to curtain-out the harshness of a day you never lived in.
 You can sit in that railroad shack until
 you die or your windows peel off, I don't care.
 There'll be a turkey browning in the oven while you
 are Working For A Living and a dotted line where a rope would be
 around your neck.
 You'll hafta put away the record you bought in
 summer because it doesn't sound right when it's cold.
 If you close your eyes or close your gland that secretes reality really tight,
 left and right,
 then you can see yourself in black and white, candlelight
 easily sitting at a picnic table in the dingy cabin
 wallpaper receding/newspaper reading
 Why do you look at me that way?
 You aren't in love with me and all you ever talk about is
 the fog and the moon and
 if you are some clandestine warrior
 with a fixation on sepia-toned sad summers
 spent in a disappointing shack of cedars, well so be it.
 I'll go, and I'll leave the turkey in the fridge.

2 + 2 = 5

Sometimes I take a look around
 Try and take stock of my life
 Wondering and pondering
 How and why
 Did I end up here?
 Lying on the ground
 Looking up at the clouds
 As life cruises by
 Did I choose this path
 Why didn't I just fly?

I then realize that life is a puzzle
 Some pieces that fit and some that don't
 Why I choose one thing
 And why I don't
 Why I try to pound that one piece into a space
 Where it doesn't belong
 And how long will I pound
 Until that piece is gone
 Disintegrates into dust
 Just as I will at the end of this journey

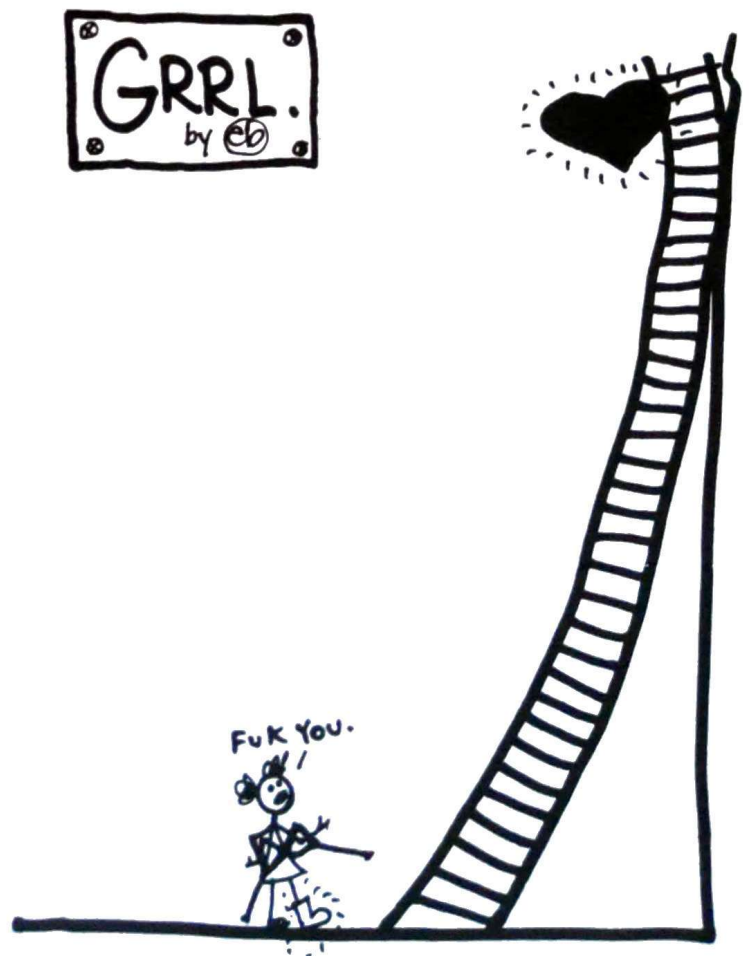
Investment Fraud? Suspicious Securities?
 Problems with a Mortgage Loan Company?
 Call Dean Haakenson (916) 322-6055

Illusions of grandeur float around my head
 Not the cars, the clothes, the money I don't have
 But the love, the friends, and the fact that at least
 I have a bed
 To come home to
 To curl up in
 To hide away in
 To laugh in
 To cry in
 To roll over and tell someone
 This is it, goodbye, then.

It's not who you are or what you do that matters anymore
 It the prize that you get behind that closed door
 The prize of the lesson at hand
 Or the prize that makes you feel more like a man

I don't pretend to know or even understand
 The meaning behind it all
 The fate
 Destiny
 The call

I simply must do what I can to wake up in the morning
 Be grateful that I am here
 And try to make the best of my day
 And maybe somebody else's along the way



Beef 'N Biscuit Casserole

1 to 1½ pounds gr. beef
½ cup chopped onion or 2 T instant
minced onion
½ cup diced green chiles or green pepper
1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce
2 Teaspoons chili powder
½ to ¾ Teaspoon garlic salt
1 can (8oz.) refrigerated buttermilk or
country style biscuits
1½ cups shredded Monterey Jack or
Cheddar cheese
½ cup Dairy Sour Cream
1 egg - slightly beaten

Brown gr. beef, onion and chiles in large frying pan; drain. Stir in tomato sauce, chili powder and garlic salt. Simmer while preparing dough. Separate biscuit dough into 10 biscuits; pull each apart into 2 layers. Press 10 biscuit layers over bottom of ungreased 8 - 9 inch square baking pan. Combine ½ cup cheese (reserve remaining cheese for topping), sour cream and egg; mix well. Remove meat mixture from heat; stir in sour cream mixture; spoon over dough. Arrange remaining biscuit layers on top; sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 375° for 25 to 30 minutes or until biscuits are deep golden brown. Makes 4 to 5 servings.

EQUIPMENT AND ITS CARE

TEAKETTLES

Fill with equal parts vinegar and water and heat to boiling. Let stand several hours; scrape off lime deposit.

TYPES OF TEAPOTS

Enamelware
Earthenware
China, Glass
Pottery

CARE OF TEAPOTS

Use a mild scouring material to remove stains from inside of pot. Wash with hot soapy water, rinse with boiling water, drain and dry thoroughly. Avoid keeping tea in pot for any length of time.

TYPES OF COFFEEPOTS

Enamel pot, used to boil or steep coffee.

Percolator, valve or valveless types.

Electric with heating element at the base.

Those for use on range.

Drip pot with metal or paper filter.

French coffee biggin. (Earthenware drip with filter)

Glass coffee maker—siphon or vacuum.

Choose a coffeepot that is easy to clean.

“an
wou
like
I be
“Oh
He
sho
Eve
Ple

t is
1.
“ Ok. so, it's last night and you are thoughtfully standing over the large circular pan of juices and vegetables, stirring them, contemplating them. All of the sudden, I am behind you, and I wrap my arm around your waste, in a way that makes you feel very secure, very safe. I whisper in your ear, "Hi", all soft and seductive like, and lightly brush my lips against your ear. I proceed to kiss your neck, again, perfectly. moist, but not too moist....soft, but incredibly present. You grab the hand that I have wrapped around your waist and press it against your belly, and then push it slowly down to the waste line on your shorts. My kisses have moved the length of your neck to the corner of your chin....”

He stops, and puts down the phone. Up until this very moment, it all made sense. No, wait. It still makes sense. He shrugs it off, and takes a sip of his Whiskey Sour (more whisky than sour)...

“ so, where was I. I was behind you with my arm around your side, my hand pressing lightly against your belly, edging, rubbing, slowly past your the waist band on your shorts. I can feel with my fingertips the edges of your pubic hair. you are very warm. I am kissing your cheek and then stand up straight and smell your hair, as my right hand still, ever so slowly descends down into the happy red forest of sweet oooooohh....words cannot transcend. my left hand finds a place between the small of your back and the area where my penis, now moderately pulsing with blood, is. I grab the back of your shorts and just inch them down a little bit...paying much more attention to the top of your butt, where the cheeks start. Fingers tenderly outlining curves. I go from smelling your hair to kneeling down slowly...first kissing your shoulder and then the skin that is exposed despite your tanktop. I stop at the small of your back, just above, again, oh that sweet curve. I close my eyes and plant a loving kiss right there above the cheeks. I begin to lick down and around your ass (is that too coarse?) and stop here and there to plant smooth smooth caressing kisses. I stop for a moment and realize how completely gorgeous you are and how turned on I am, and I bite. a bite that does the opposite of hurt. all the muscles in my body are taught as I bite gingerly the skin of your "bootay" as some call it. My hands begin to rub your legs. massaging them, as you are standing (is she still paying attention to the juice and the vegetables?) I pull your shorts down to your ankles.....

He

well.

there is certainly a difference. all's I am saying is that there doesn't HAVE to be. I just think that a woman using the excuse that "oh, I am not being completely open and honest because I am a woman and it is socially acceptable for me to hide what I want...for the sake of the game"...I just think that that is exactly the thing that perpetuates gender roles/sexism, and keeps a lot of sensitive lonely guys lonely.

Not all guys want to play the game.

now, I think I am venting....and I do realize that I must play the game to get some action. But, in my defense, I do hold meaningful embraces with men, and speak with my women friends on a purely Homo Sapien level (as opposed to man vs. woman). You must admit that some of the dynamics surrounding men and women relationships are entirely unnatural, seemingly unhealthy, and purely dogmatic in nature.

you must Dude. YOU MUST!

Sincerely Yours,

Not a Woman Hater

She

I didn't say I agreed with it. But, historically speaking, in regards to pre-industrial revolution society, gender roles served as a means of survival. women had to work together, household chores took days instead of minutes and it was necessary for women to stick close to home, to act as providers, mothers in training. then all of the sudden women were allowed to admit sexuality. for someone like me who is a female who has had issues with my sexuality, not of orientation, just with being ok with myself as a sexual being and i saw first hand how roles were distributed during dating rituals. I think you play the game better and more actively than you'd care to admit. we all do. but i do admit change and reform is in order and that it can be different. but asking for everyone to change, for the ENTIRE social construct to change, may be a bit much. I just mean that I realize there is a stigma is in place, although I try to rise above it do what makes me feel comfortable.

That's what she said.....

FRUITS

TO MAKE ORANGE OR GRAPEFRUIT SEGMENTS pare with a sharp knife, slide knife blade along each segment wall to center and turn out segment with a slight twist of the knife.

TO PEEL GRAPEFRUIT AND ORANGES EASILY let them stand in boiling water about 8 minutes before peeling.

TO KEEP LEMONS FRESH place in glass jar, fill with water and cover tightly.

TO OBTAIN MOST JUICE FROM LEMONS heat before squeezing.

TO EXTRACT JUICE FROM LEMON WHEN A SMALL AMOUNT IS NEEDED puncture the skin with a fork and gently squeeze out the amount required.

TO KEEP LIMES FRESH place them in a jar, cover and store in refrigerator.

TO REMOVE PITS FROM CHERRIES EASILY insert a new pen point into penholder, pointed end in, and take out pits with the round end, or with hump of unused hairpin.

TO AVOID WRINKLED SKINS ON BAKED APPLES slit in a few places before baking.

TO KEEP CUT FRUITS FROM DISCOLORING sprinkle lemon or pineapple juice over them.

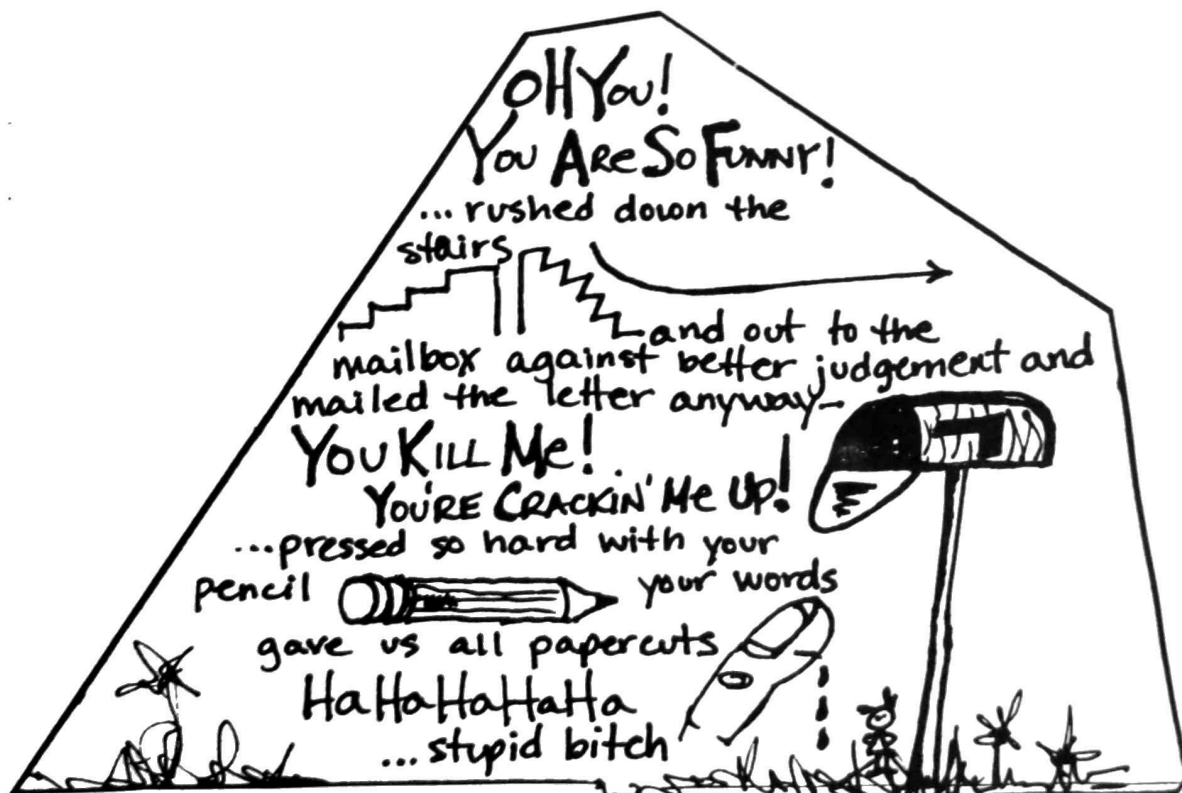
TO PREVENT DRIED FRUITS FROM CLOGGING THE FOOD CHOPPER add a few drops of lemon juice before grinding.

TO KEEP JUICE IN FRUIT WHICH HAS BEEN CUT cover exposed part with waxed paper and place fruit cut-side down on a dish, or fit with a transparent bowl cover and leave cut side up.

WASH BERRIES BEFORE hulling to retain juice.

To be honest, I haven't been sick.

I've been exercising constantly- 10 sets of 10 jumping jacks, 10 squat thrusts and 20, yes 20, push-ups. I've been 'power-walking' around Land Park in the morning. I get my hair in a scrunchie, throw on the Everlast sweats, strap on the ankle weights and off I go. If I'm lucky I can follow some "hot moms" pushing their kid and trying to lose "baby butt". I can make it all the way to Bucky's without stopping. Once there, I treat myself to a skinny Mocha Verdi and a biscotti. It's nice to go somewhere where they know you by yr first name and drink. I like that. Once I've cooled down, I power-walk to a quiet section of the park and force myself to throw up the skinny Mocha Verdi and biscotti out of guilt. I'll look at my reflection in the puddle of vomit and I see this hideously obese monster. That monster is me. I claw at my hair and eyes and stomp on my chunky mirror image, smearing half-digested Italian pastries into the 100% cotton twill. I strip naked and beg passers-by to "just look at me." But none do, for I am grotesque in my corpulence. Children run to their parents as I stagger towards them, a sack of skin overstuffed with cellulite and blubber. My buttocks are a flat vertical plane of while marbled fat, every step forms shuddering canyons and winking dimples, stomach swaying from side to side, arms outreached, trying to touch, trying to feel, fingers wanting acceptance but getting only angry parents cursing at me with their angry words...words that hurt. Oh I hurt. I howl at the skies, "Why did you make me this way!" and curse the gods in heaven. There is only one thing that can take this hurt, this pain from me. Another biscotti. So naked and dejected, I walk back down to Starbucks...







This Hotei lived in the T'ang dynasty. He had no desire to call himself a Zen master or to gather many disciples around him. Instead, he walked the streets with a big sack into which he would put gifts of candy and fruit and doughnuts. These he would give to children who gathered around him to play. He established a kindergarten of the streets.

Whenever he met a Zen devotee, he would extend his hand and say, "Give me one penny." And if anyone asked him to return to a temple to teach, again he would reply: "Give me one penny."

Once, as he was about his play-work, two Zen masters happened along, and one inquired, "What is the significance of Zen?"

Hotei immediately plopped his sack down on the ground in silent answer.

"Then," asked the other, "What is the actualization of Zen?"

At once, the Happy Chinaman swung the sack over his shoulder and continued on his way.



for people of all ages

FISH AND MEAT

TO MAKE FISH FIRM AND WHITE add a little lemon juice to water while boiling.

TO AVOID UNPLEASANT ODORS WHILE COOKING FISH cover with browned butter or lemon juice.

TO REMOVE FISH ODORS FROM COOKING UTENSILS add 2 tablespoons ammonia to the dish water.

TO KEEP SALMON AND OTHER FRAGILE FOODS FROM BREAKING WHILE BEING BOILED place food on a plate, tie in a square of cheesecloth and lower all into water.

MEAT OR CHICKEN MAY BE FLOURED EASILY by placing in a paper bag with flour and shaking well.

TO KEEP BACON FROM CURLING snip edges with shears before cooking or broil between racks.

TO KEEP BONES ON CROWN ROASTS FROM BURNING place in pan with bones down or spear ends of bones with fat meat.

WHEN PREPARING SMALL BITS OF MEAT place them on skewers.

Find the Leader

Number of Players: 5-25

Length of Time: 20-30 minutes

Object of the Game: To guess who is directing the group to change from one motion to another.

To Play:

One person is chosen to be "it," and is sent out of the room. One of the people left is chosen to be the leader.

The leader of the group directs the group in some kind of simple motion (e.g., hand-clapping, thumb-twiddling, whistling, tongue-clicking, etc.). All others in the group imitate the leader so everyone is doing the same thing, *together*.

"It" is called back into the room and stands in the middle of the circle the others have formed. The leader changes the motion repeatedly. He and the others in the circle try to keep together, so that the leader is inconspicuous.

As the group goes through the pattern of motions, "it" tries to guess who the leader is. "It" gets only three guesses. If "it" doesn't "Find the Leader," he is "it" again (maximum of two times to be "it"). The leader always becomes the next "it."

Comments:

This game is most effective when played for shorter periods of time.

Purpose or Benefit

"Find the Leader" shows the importance of cooperation and togetherness. This is a good game for children as well as adults.

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Be Brave Bold Robot . Issue 6 . July 2003

Just one email from you could help save this boy's life. DEANHAAKENSEN@YAHOO.COM

All opinions, expressed or inferred, are just that - Opinions...thrust from the author's hold, to survive for as long as they can. Love them or leave them, but please, do not dwell.

